



Louisville Metro Hall, formerly known as the Jefferson County Courthouse until the city-county merger in 2003, is the oldest governmental building in Jefferson County. It is the fifth to serve that function, all of which were located in the same 6th and Jefferson Street area. Construction began in 1836, Envisioned by early Louisville civic leader James Guthrie (1792 - 1869) to serve as the new Kentucky state capital building, construction of the Greek Revival style structure began in 1836 as designed by Gideon Shryock (1802-1880), noted architect of the Old Statehouse in Frankfort and other buildings.

The financial panic of 1837 soon halted most work, with only the first floor completed and occupied by 1842. Work did not finish until 1859-60 from designs by Isaiah Rogers (1800 - 1869) under the direction of Albert Fink (1827-1897), known for his bridge and engineering works for the L&N Railroad - hence the use of iron for the grand staircase, as flooring over the rotunda on the second level and other features. From the early 1840's until the completion of City Hall in 1873, it housed both city and county governments. Brinton B. Davis (1862-1952) oversaw an extensive remodeling effort after a fire caused severe damage in 1905. Today, the interior rooms have much the same appearance as they did in 1906 due to a renovation completed in 1981. In 1972, the structure was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Courthouse and grounds feature a number of statues and historic items. In the rotunda, a white marble statue of Henry Clay (1777-1852), by Joel Tanner Hart (1810 -1877), the eminent nineteenth century Kentucky sculptor, was installed in 1867. The statue replicates a colossal bronze installed in New Orleans in 1860. In 1986, the Mulloy family donated an 1823 copper plate engraving of the Declaration of Independence, one of only 31 known surviving copies of the 201 originally printed at the order of then Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. On the ground floor, nine reproduction early United States flags were installed in 1987 to mark the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution.

In front of the building, a bronze statue of Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) atop the Liberty Bell rests on a polished black granite pedestal, a gift of the Bernheim family in 1900. Louisville's namesake, King Louis XVI (1754-1793) of France is depicted in an 1820's white marble statue at 6th and Jefferson, one of a pair commissioned by his daughter Marie Therese Charlotte (1778-1851) for the city of Montpellier and given to Louisville in 1967 in honor of our Sister City relationship. Recognizing Kentucky's 56 Medal of Honor recipients and dedicated on Veterans Day 2001, stands a statue of Pfc. John Squires (1925-1944), the first Medal of Honor recipient from our state. At 5th and Jefferson, dedicated in 1949, the Jefferson County WWII Memorial remembers the 1,450 soldiers from our community who died in that conflict. Several smaller memorials and markers are scattered on the lawn around the building.